

**STATE OF WASHINGTON
EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM**

Approved by the

Federal Communications Commission, March 3, 1997

Minutes of the State Emergency Communication Committee Meeting

November 13, 2014

Present: Terry Spring-KWPX TV; Lowell Kiesow-KPLU; Ted Buehner-NWS Seattle; Clay Freinwald-WSU; Jim Dalke-DBS; Chris Utzinger-WA MIL EMD

Phone: Ruth Brownstein-KAOS; Andy Brown-NWS Spokane; Elray Rasmussen-Comcast Spokane; Adam Hazell-Ion Media Networks; Charlie Osgood-Columbia River Media Group; Carri Gordon-WSP; Tom Sharp-Pierce County; Marlin Jackson-KXLY; Mike Dingle-Douglas County; Phil Johnson-CPS LACC; Scot Miller-Okanagan County; Don White-Tribune; Dave Holloran-San Juan County

The meeting was called to order by Clay. Due to problems with the phone bridge, the start was delayed. Thanks to Ted and the National Weather Service we were able to use their phone bridge. Introductions were made. The minutes for the previous meeting were approved.

Tab updates are on-going and distributed on the remailer and the website. See http://www.emd.wa.gov/telcom/telecom_eas_plan.shtml.

The recent false EAS test was discussed. A syndicated radio host was making fun of a station that ran an EAS alert during a ball game. He ran EAS tones from the national test from a few years ago. The FCC issued a public notice on November 7. See it here: <http://www.fcc.gov/document/eas-advisory-inquiry-retransmission-unauthorized-eas-message>. This issue is not dead. The debate continues. There is a good chance the Commission will be issuing fines at some point.

The Tab 10 monitoring assignments were discussed. These are not being updated without the participation of the local LACC's. Clay does not have the time to keep track of the whole state. The local areas are encouraged to update their monitoring assignments and have them posted on the state plan web site.

Welcome back to the wet side Jerry Hill. He found a typo in the recently distributed Tab 25. It will be revised again. Also, a big thanks to Chris Moores at WSEM for her work on the EAS web site.

In Old Business, the committee is still looking for participation from non-technical types. Don White volunteered to keep Tab 2, the local area chair roster. The committee is also still looking for participation from the cable industry. Tab 19 has not been updated since 1998! Jim Dalke is contacting the NCTA (National Cable and Telecommunications Association).

In New Business, there are still people not connected to the remailer. To join go to <http://sea.sbe16.org/mailman/listinfo/eas-wa>. The newer forms of public warning should be working together with EAS. Ted suggested distributing a "white paper" to share with local authorities. It could include a mission statement, an invitation to join the remailer and how to contact the people involved. It could be distributed on the WSEMA (Washington State Emergency Management Association) list. Public warning systems are "electronic pathways" and should use all available means to reach the public. There should be many ways to originate and activate all systems.

The old analog backup systems should be kept for back up purposes. Being able to originate from almost anywhere using the internet is fine, but the internet is vulnerable. Some areas might have budgetary issues and may make the

decision to not have any back up. Or their back up may mean having a reliable connection to the state EOC. The SECC encourages the local areas to maintain any backup systems they may have access to.

It was suggested that all the tabs pertaining to event codes and their priorities could be consolidated into one tab, possibly using a matrix format. This would include Tabs 8, 17, and 25. Lowell volunteered to work on this.

The last RMT in the Central Puget Sound area failed at the source. An explanation was provided on the remailer. As per the FCC regulations, this should be attached to your EAS log if you are in this area.

The NWS Spokane office recently hosted an Inland Empire LECC meeting that included an office tour. NWS staff learned more about the concerns involving multiple RMTs from the NWS office in the Inland Empire local area and now has a better understanding of those concerns. The NWS office there splits the RMT feeds to their separate area weather radio transmitters. Efforts are underway to work with the LECC to find a solution.

There have been some changes at Premier Networks, but not to the EAS feed. XD-Pro receivers should still work on the feed, with or without authorization.

The Central Puget Sound Local Relay Network repeater is back up and running on 450.0875 mhz. Bill Putney came over from Port Townsend to work on it. A testing protocol is being worked on.

The Technical Committee worked, and solved, some EAS issues in Omak. A SAGE box wasn't programmed correctly.

The recent AMBER alerts have gone well. The Washington State Patrol has centralized the entry points. Five of the last 9 child abduction cases have been solved directly due to AMBER Alerts. Carrie has been doing some training, which has helped. The WSP has a training video on YouTube. See it at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCV_ICWP49o.

The NWS's Mt. Octopus NOAA Weather Radio site now has a new Armstrong dual transmitter as of October providing more reliable on-air service. The backup power generator at the site remains out of service given it stills needs maintenance and fuel. Roy of Wash EMD (not in attendance) needs to work with the Navy and NWS Seattle to find the generator solutions including use of the local sponsors to fund these activities.

Ted noted that the NWS has been highlighting use of non-weather related EAS messages by local originators at a number of pre-winter season meetings this fall. NWS Seattle uses a SAGE Endec and other related EAS equipment to frequently ping the IPAWS server and relay local area non-weather EAS messages onto their NOAA Weather Radio stations in western Washington such as the recent Amber Alerts. The SECC had a briefing on the NWS HazCollect system at the March 2014 meeting. HazCollect is still undergoing testing with the IPAWS server with limited success. In time, HazCollect will be able to relay local area EAS messages to NWS offices for relay onto area NOAA Weather Radio stations. In the meantime until HazCollect is ready for full implementation nationwide, NWS Spokane is hesitant to install a SAGE Endec to mirror the NWS Seattle system until some security holes are addressed. Lowell indicated he will contact SAGE to learn more about how to resolve these security holes.

The EAS mailing list was discussed. It is meant to be used for information sharing, technical problem solving, and distribution of documents. Please use it for its intended purpose and don't be inflammatory. Be aware that there are people on the remailer with government email address, which means that the list is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. This will be a part of the remailer "white paper".

In the Inland Empire local area, there have been complaints about the reception and relay of multiple monthly tests. The NWS office there splits the feeds to their different weather radio transmitters. There are different counties on the tests on the separate feeds. This is being looked at. The local weather office also has concerns with their SAGE box which are being addressed. Their LACC meeting is next week.

In Wenatchee, KPQ, the local LP-1, no longer monitors KHQ. This is supposed to help prevent multiple tests from getting into the area. Also, Grant County is moving into the North Central local area.

In the Okanogan, a meeting was recently held to get the local area up and running. Clay and others attended.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 8, at 9:30 AM at Camp Murray.

Terry Spring